

DRAFT – FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

MICHIGAN GREAT LAKES PROTECTION FUND **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:**

GREAT LAKES AND WATER STEWARDSHIP EDUCATION AND OUTREACH **PROGRAMMING NEEDS**

I. Overview

This is a request for proposals for a project to understand the successes and challenges in delivering equitable, place-based Great Lakes and water-related education and outreach programming in Michigan to advance Great Lakes stewardship. EGLE will fund a project to conduct a statewide needs assessment to identify 1) opportunities to build upon successful efforts and best practices that build Michiganders' knowledge of [Great Lakes Literacy Principles across all ages](#) and promote actions that support long-term sustainability of the Great Lakes ecosystem and 2) barriers, needs, and resources needed to overcome challenges and improve equity.

This project will conduct a social network analysis of statewide and community-based partners delivering place-based Great Lakes and water-related education and outreach programs for Michigan residents and communities. The goal is to identify and understand existing relationships and networks of organizations across the state and the topics and audiences that their programs address. The result of the social network analysis and needs assessment will identify shared goals and desired outcomes among Great Lakes and water-related education and outreach partners and programs, priority water issues and audiences, and opportunities for collaboration and coalition building. This project will also identify exemplary programs, best practices, and strategies to address gaps and reduce disparities in water education and build upon successful efforts to equitably engage and educate Michigan residents on water issues and advance stewardship actions.

The project is part of a larger initiative led by the Michigan Department of Environment Great Lakes, and Energy's (EGLE) Office of the Great Lakes (OGL) to identify resources and supports needed to build capacity within communities, organizations, and institutions to meaningfully engage Michigan residents on water issues and to foster Great Lakes Literacy and water stewardship, using community and place-based contexts. This project also links to the [From Students to Stewards Initiative](#) – a collaborative statewide water literacy initiative created by the OGL, Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity's (LEO) MiSTEM Network, and Michigan Department of Education that focuses on institutionalizing place, problem, and project-based learning around Great Lakes literacy in K-12 schools to address Michigan residents of all ages.

The results of this project will inform the development of future programming and funding priorities for EGLE and the Michigan Great Lakes Protection Fund administered by the OGL to increase Great Lakes water literacy and foster water stewardship through education, engagement, and collaboration.

The grantee will be expected to:

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- A. Conduct a social network analysis of organizational, institutional, tribal, and community-based partners and experts delivering place-based Great Lakes and water-related education and outreach programming in Michigan including efforts developed for and with tribal, front-line community, underserved, and environmental justice communities. Identify priority water issues and audiences for programming, exemplary programs, and best practices in education and outreach.
- B. Develop and conduct a statewide needs assessment using a collaborative participatory approach with partners and experts identified in paragraph A and other Great Lakes funders. The assessment will identify current needs, barriers, and challenges in delivering equitable Great Lakes and water-related education and outreach programming to advance Great Lakes stewardship behaviors and actions, including in tribal, underserved, frontline, and environmental justice communities as defined by MiEJScreen.
- C. Identify strategies and recommendations to address results of the social network analysis and needs assessment that advance shared goals and desired outcomes among Great Lakes and water-related education and outreach partners and programs, address gaps and reduce disparities in water education, build upon successful efforts and best practices to equitably engage and educate Michigan residents on water issues, and create opportunities for collaboration and coalition building.

Approximately \$200,000 will be provided to one applicant. This grant program will be funded by the Michigan Great Lakes Protection Fund (MGLPF) and administered by EGLE's OGL.

II. **Background**

Abundant freshwater resources are at the root of the state's culture, heritage, and economy and are why many Michiganders choose to live, work, and play in the peninsula state. Clean plentiful water is the lifeblood of our culture, our economy, our health, and our way of life. Despite these deep connections, according to the 2016 [Michigan Water Strategy](#), many Michigan residents lack basic knowledge about the Great Lakes, watersheds, and about how water resources are directly affected by the decisions and actions of people. Ensuring the health of our water resources for current and future generations depends on creating a culture of stewardship through lifelong education about water that is based on the characteristics and needs of their own communities. Increasing Michiganders' Great Lakes literacy and awareness of how their daily actions impact water resources, the environment, and public health will equip them to reduce and prevent negative impacts and establish water stewardship practices.

Michigan's unique and diverse communities require tailored approaches to spreading awareness and targeting education in a place-based manner. Moreover, the increasing complexity of water resource issues such as invasive species, urban and rural runoff, historical and new sources of contamination, and changes in climate require new approaches and strategies that can equitably help all Michiganders.

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Currently, many agencies, organizations, and community partners are implementing Great Lakes and water-related education and outreach efforts in Michigan and are working toward similar goals. To inform future efforts, there is a need to understand the current barriers, gaps, and needs in current Great Lakes and water-related education programming and to focus through an equity lens on underserved, frontline, and environmental justice communities. Michigan has an opportunity to increase our collective impact, identify and share effective education and outreach strategies to address gaps and reduce disparities in Great Lakes and water-related education, and build coalitions for better engagement, coordination, and effectiveness.

Deliverables

The deliverables of the project should be:

- A. A social network analysis of organizational, institutional, tribal, and community-based partners and experts implementing Great Lakes and water-related education, outreach and stewardship programs and activities including efforts developed for and with frontline, underserved, and environmental justice communities.
- B. A statewide needs assessment that identifies barriers, gaps, and needs for tools and resources to equitably engage and educate Michiganders about the Great Lakes ecosystem as well as increase stewardship actions that contribute toward long-term sustainability of the Great Lakes and Michigan's water resources. The assessment must include partners and programs working for and with tribes, underserved, frontline, and environmental justice communities.
- C. A brief review of the body of work used to inform the project – including participatory methods and community-engaged research (surveys of Michiganders' current knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions about the Great Lakes and water issues; social science evaluation instruments used to evaluate education and outreach program impacts (e.g. Social Indicators Planning and Evaluation System (SIPES)).
- D. A summary of findings, successful efforts, and best practices in education and outreach, and recommendations for strategies to address the results of the needs assessment; build upon successful efforts; and increase collaboration, coordination, and coalition building. Strategy recommendations should include efforts to increase equitable education practices developed for and with tribes, underserved, frontline, and environmental justice communities.

EGLE and other state agency project partners are expected to work closely with the team as a larger collaborative partnership.